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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

SEP 17 1975

Honorable Kent Frizzell
Acting Secretary of Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Secretary Schlesinger has asked me to respond to your letter of July 17, 1975, requesting logistic support for a comprehensive radiological survey of Pacific atolls affected by the nuclear weapons test program.

Given the recent decision to postpone resettlement of Bikini Island, due to potential hazards stemming from both external and internal radiation, there is no doubt that a new radiological survey, similar to the one conducted at Eniwetak, is necessary and desirable. However, before making any new commitments, which might require authorizations and appropriations by Congress, I would like to see a comprehensive review of our plans and programs to cope with the various problems which appear to be residual to the testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific. This review appears to be essential in terms of:

- The mounting cost of compensation, ex gratia payments, and resettlement programs already authorized or under consideration by the Congress.
- The requirement to develop realistic options for the return or retention of atolls which will bear the lingering effects of radioactive fall-out for some years to come.
- The necessity to identify and manage the residual liabilities and responsibilities which will be faced by the United States Government once the Trusteeship Agreement is terminated.
- The need for Defense, Interior, and ERDA to plan, program, and budget on the basis of commonly understood and accepted objectives in the Marshall Islands District.

I will be suggesting by separate correspondence to Ambassador Williams that the Working Group for Micronesian Status Negotiations undertake this reassessment, with a view toward the development of specific national objectives and tasks to be pursued in the Marshall Islands District during the period FY 1977-81.

Sincerely,

Bill Clements

RG	326
Collection	L: Joe Deal
Box	13
Folder	43 Bikini-Lawsuit Correspondence

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